



# DODGE COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

**Dale J Schmidt** Sheriff    **Scott Smith** Chief Deputy

## Law of the Month

Most people are familiar with the laws regarding speed restrictions. Chapter 346.57 of the Wisconsin State Statutes covers most rules regarding the speed for vehicles. The laws we are going to talk about this month are different from our usual sources, they are some Laws of Physics. Why are we discussing these laws? Because the average person doesn't remember these from when they went through high school physics class but they are at play every day on Dodge County roadways. Moreover, they can be the difference between making it to your destination safely or not at all.

I am not going to bore or confuse you with the actual formulas or discussion on braking distance or momentum. I will explain that when we double a vehicle's speed, the braking distance and momentum do not double, they go up fourfold. That's correct. So while it may take a vehicle traveling 40 mph 125' to stop, it would take a vehicle going 80 mph 498' to stop. That is about one and a half football fields.

Another factor to consider is that many crashes could be avoided or significantly reduced in severity if the vehicles involved had been driving just a few miles per hour slower. And when we consider the fourfold increase in momentum when speeds double, that means vehicles collide four times harder and there is four times more damage to vehicles and occupants. When considering that most roads in Dodge County are rural roads with speed limits of 55-65 mph that means many crashes are at higher speeds and the potential for significant damage and injury is greater.

Research shows that most drivers admit to speeding but don't view their own speeding as the problem. At the same time they expect law enforcement to do something about the speeding of others. Captain Scott Mittelstadt of the Dodge County Sheriff's Office asks that everyone make the conscious choice to slow down, obey the speed limits and encourage your friends and family to do the same. We cannot do it alone, we need everyone to be part of the solution to safer roads in Dodge County.